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Our single-word issue title “publish” no doubt conjures up all sorts of anxieties in most writers and academics. It first rings through the head as a command to produce, to make, to compose—and underlines its necessity. Publish implies an invocation of engagement with its sister noun “public.” It also suggests an interchange and exchange between an audience of readers and the produced texts, leading to something that has been called a “sphere” in its grandiose claims and a “community” in its slightly more modest conceit. To publish is to produce a different form of conversation, one that is abstracted from the oral into the written and then presumably back out into both written and spoken, thereby producing new circuits of interchange and exchange.

Circulating through the concept of publish are a number of other associations. There is an industry that has organised what appears in printed form for centuries. To publish has often involved passing through the various gatekeepers, some economic, some cultural, and some connected to knowledge societies. And publish, as a concept, thus also has complicated relationships to authors and ownership, as forms of intellectual property and copyright have organised the distribution of published materials.

Technology and its capacities have always had a close association with the capacity to publish. The printing press, for instance, along with the light-weight technology of paper, permitted the mass reproduction and distribution of printed materials. Depending on where you lie on the spectrum of technological determinism, these technologies led to the development of publics or at minimum were part of a cluster of events—technological, economic, and cultural—which led to the publishing industries and wider reading publics. The most significant transformation of this system of production and delivery has been the technology of the Internet. Because of the capacity to self-publish—that is, to simultaneously produce and distribute your work online in a high-quality format—the formidable publishing industry is at least challenged by the new distribution of information.

The title of this issue has been chosen with some thought. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of M/C—a publishing experiment that embraced the new possibilities of getting ideas disseminated that the Internet had to offer. I (David) remember quite vividly the moment where we went live with our first issue and pressing the button at the Brisbane Internet café, which at least metaphorically brought the journal to its public life. I also

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remember the giddy sensation of measuring our “hits” through our installed counter and thereby getting the statistical breakdown of what countries, what time of day, what Internet browser visitors were using, and what day of the week our new readers were sampling our journal. In a sense, through M/C we had broken at least some of the gates that determined publishing patterns in academic circles for most of the last century. But what was also interesting was the kinds of internal gates that we constructed to legitimise our enterprise, to give it academic standing, and to ensure its very longevity.

We moved in three directions: first we worked diligently on building the reviewing system to ensure through some measure that what we produced had a sense of quality and intellectual integrity. After all, one of our first insights was that unlike a print journal and its costs, there were no limits to how long any of our “issues” had to be: we could accept 100 submissions if we wanted to on a particular theme. Time was the scarce commodity—not only our time, but also our readers’ use of time. And as one of the articles in this issue explores, we were advancing quite resolutely towards academic legitimacy (Mitchell). Second, we also worked on how to adopt, adapt, and innovate to the exigencies of the new platform of delivery. Here we were thinking about different kinds of content as well as the frequency of the change in content to keep our users connected to our site. Emerging from that process was the sister “publication” *M/C Reviews*, which worked under decidedly different systems of review, distinctive and sometime continuous systems of production and publishing, and over time a clearly different tone and style in its type of engagement with the unfolding of cultural life and practices. Third, we worked on establishing the distinctiveness of the approach where we blended an intellectual delivery in combination with openness in writing style. The objective at least was to make it readable by a wider public even though it would be drawing on the expertise of academics and intellectuals.

Perhaps what has been interesting about the M/C experiment is how patterns emerged and consistency developed over time. The single-word concept, the associated artwork, the length of articles, and in general even the number of articles per issue all became quite similar from issue to issue. Within those patterns, the sediments of pre-Internet publishing informed the new circuits of production, reception, and response that we had developed through the online journal.

This issue of *M/C Journal* continues the publishing tradition and indeed reproduces the patterns of its first issues. What you will find in the lighted screen that now serves as the everyday and even mundane reading tablet, is an issue that dissects the idea of “publish”.

We begin with an enlightened article by Sherman Young on the new reading toys that have emerged in this era of digital publishing where we move lugubriously towards the acceptance of the reading screen over as well as beside the beautifully portable and tactile format of the book and the magazine. Our second article by [Johanne Provençal](#) provides a pre-ambulatory speed-crawl through the history of publishing to inform the development/status of Canadian academic publishing.

The bizarre but beautiful world of academic publishing has generated three related texts. We move from [Guy Redden's](#) article on academic publishing and its forms of adjudication of quality to Bruno Starrs's study of how doctorates by publication have generated an uneven spectrum of quality. [Peta Mitchell's](#) article on *M/C Journal* investigates how online academic publishing and what can be called open source publishing have exposed some of the fault-lines in intellectual work and its determination of value.

The digital divide is explored further through [Ianto Ware's](#) exegesis of how it plays across a generational divide of understanding about what constitutes engagement in the new publishing publics. [Susan Currie and Donna Lee Brien](#) investigate the hypothetical that there has been a growth in life writing through a closer look at the inconsistent publishing and sales data details of biographies and autobiographies over the last century. And the issue concludes with [Annette Patterson and Kerry Mallan's](#) study of the post-digital through a closer reflection on the digitalisation of Australian children's literature through the CLDR.

Ten years later, the M/C publishing experiment continues and more or less advances along the three trajectories outlined above. And its continuity is a collective process and a collaborative vision that has depended on many contributors, but none more centrally than Axel Bruns. I want to thank Axel Bruns and to dedicate this issue to both his legacy and the legacy of the first members of the editorial collective that began the experiment in early 1998. Thanks to your first excessive but most valued devotion of time and effort, M/C was launched into the fractious world of publishing. And on behalf of Peta Mitchell and myself, thanks to the work of everyone who helped make this particular issue come to life and hopefully match the quality and the vision that M/C has developed over these ten years. So, enjoy this issue and in a smarmy moment of nostalgia I will end this editorial with the single word that I ended my first editorial: engage.



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